

NEFIRS News

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Don't Forget!

As of January 1, we are only accepting NFIRS 5.0 reports (electronic or paper). If you send in NFIRS 4.1 reports they will be returned to you to transfer to the new reports.

This has happened with several departments so far this year. Some transferred their reports over to 5.0 but the others haven't yet. Your reports are important to us. Please resubmit your reports using NFIRS 5.0.

If you do not have the NFIRS 5.0 manuals and forms or are interested in software, please contact us.

PLEASE, especially if sending in paper, send your reports at least quarterly if not monthly and be sure you complete all the necessary modules - not just the Basic Module.

New Website

Our new website, www.sfm.state.ne.us, is finally up. Please check it out and give us your feedback. There are many resources, statistics, and other subjects available that may be of interest to fire departments.

With the new website and more departments getting email, we will start to post information on the website and/or email departments. This will save on printing and postage. We will still mail things to departments that we are not aware of having email.

Data Entry and Statistics

Departments using software: Please be very careful when entering dates and times on the Basic Module. In preparing the statistics on the website, I discovered several discrepancies that caused some average response times to be skewed. One average was over 21,000 minutes because the Arrival Date was entered as 6 years after the Alarm Date.

Departments who complete paper reports should also be careful, but I will catch any discrepancies when entering paper reports. Since I do not see the data submitted electronically I can't catch long response

times until I run reports and prepare statistics.

Another factor that skewed average response times is reports for non-emergency patient transports from a nursing home or hospital in one city to a nursing home or hospital in another city. Transports from the western part of the state to Lincoln or Omaha can account for a 3-4 hour response time. I checked with the US Fire Administration on the proper way to handle these and was told that NFIRS was not designed to capture this information. NFIRS is designed to report emergency responses only.

Another area that departments using software need to be careful when entering incident information is civilian and firefighter fire casualties in Field J of the Basic Module. While I was working on statistics I came up with firefighter deaths in years I knew there were none. After reviewing the report it was apparent these should have been counted as injuries. However, the number was entered in the Fatality field instead of the Injury field.

I haven't done any statistics on fire causes yet as I am still trying to figure out the best way to do this with the new reporting system. One thing that would help is if the Factors Contributing field on the Fire Module would be completed whenever possible with a code other than None. I realize this is occasionally valid but sometimes it is also an easy out to get around a required field.

The codes used for Factors Contributing are comparable to Ignition Factor in the old reporting system which is the field I previously used for causal statistics.

Fire Department Payment Letter

If you have not returned your payment letter yet, please do so as soon as possible. Also, if you receive a check please cash it promptly. Every year we seem to have a couple of chiefs who forget to cash their check and then we have to do follow up and issue a duplicate if wanted.

Federal Data Entry Tool

When registering for the Data Entry Tool please use your fire department name or FDID number for the user name. Do not put spaces in the name and use only letters and/or numbers in the name.

Likewise when creating a password or changing it keep in mind it must be at least 8 characters long, at least one of the characters is a number, and that you only use letters or numbers in your password. You will have to change your password every 90 days and you cannot reuse a password.

Adding special characters (slashes, dashes, asterisks, etc) to your user name and password creates problems and will probably prevent you from successfully logging into the Tool.

The Data Entry Tool will run on computers with Windows XP Home edition. However, you must login to your computer as the administrator in order to install the software. You should also turn off any antivirus program before installing the software as this could cause something to install incorrectly.

NFIRS 5.0 Reminders

NOTE: References to fields and sections are by the names the USFA gave the objects. Some software vendors changed the names and/or locations. Hopefully you will still understand what I am referring to. If not, let me know.

- ◆ Don't forget to keep your software up-to-date. All vendors should have released new versions by now to comply with changes/enhancements requested by USFA in January.
- ◆ Incident numbers must be ALL numeric (1234567). Letters or special characters (-, /) are not allowed in the field. Users of the Federal Data Entry Tool may find that they can enter letters or special characters but that is a flaw in the software that is not scheduled to be fixed. Please remember to use all numbers when entering your incident numbers.
- ◆ Incident Type 110 Structure Fire, other (Conversion Only) should not be used. This is reserved for converting 4.1 data to 5.0 and is not an acceptable code in 5.0. There are other codes that have (Conversion Only) after them. None of these codes should be used in 5.0.
- ◆ If your report is for a wildland fire, you may complete either the Fire Module or the Wildland Module (preferred) but you should not complete both.
- ◆ When completing Factors Contributing on the Fire Module do not enter 71 Exposure Fire if the report is not for an exposure fire (Exposure Number on the Basic Module will be greater than 000).
- ◆ Action Taken code 11 cannot be used unless the

Incident Type is coded in the 100 series. If the Incident Type is coded as a controlled burn (631 or 632) or unauthorized burning (561) and you extinguish the fire, then it is considered a hostile fire and the Incident Type should be coded in the 100 series.

◆ If someone is burning off crop stubble or pasture land or a similar scenario, the Cause of Ignition (E1 of the Fire Module) should not be coded as 1 Intentional. While the fire was intentionally set, it is not a deliberate misuse of a heat source or a fire of an incendiary nature. It would be more appropriate to code the Cause of Ignition as 2 Unintentional and the Factors Contributing to Ignition (E2) as 73 Outside open fire for debris or waste disposal or 75 Agriculture or land management burns, includes prescribed burn.

◆ The 80 series of codes for Heat Source on the Fire Module are for exposure fires only. These codes should not be used for non-exposure fires as a critical error will result.

◆ If you use Incident Type code 300 "Rescue and EMS incident, other" the EMS Module is not allowed. If you need to complete an EMS Module you will need to select another Incident Type. The EMS Module is only allowed for Incident Types 100-243, 311, 321-323, 351-381, 400-431, 451 or 900.

◆ The Last Unit Cleared Date/Time are required fields. There is no star by the field but the fine print above the fields indicate this is required except for wildland fires.

◆ If you are dispatched to an incident, canceled en route and everyone returns to the station, code the Incident Type as 611 and Action Taken as 93. The only dates/times that are needed on the Basic Module are the Alarm Date/Time and Last Unit Cleared Date/Time.

If some continued on to the scene even though the dispatcher cancelled the call, the incident should be coded according to what they found upon arrival at the scene, which may or may not be the type of call the department was originally dispatched. A new code has been added that may be appropriate to use - 622 No incident found on arrival at dispatch address.

◆ If you choose to complete the optional Personnel or Apparatus Modules you only need to complete one or the other - not both.

◆ Software users: Please include your FDID number and timeframe in the filename (example: 99001June02.txt). Having this information in the filename helps to locate the right file if needed.